

STATE OF IOWA AFFIRMATIVE ACTION/DIVERSITY PLAN AND REPORT

Diversity Plan's Relationship to Affirmative Action

Each department will submit by July 31st an Affirmative Action/Diversity Plan to DAS, who will receive it on behalf of the Diversity Council. This document is to report on your activities and accomplishments for FY 2008, and report on your intended activities for FY 2009.

For the purposes of this document, the term protected classes refers specifically to females, minorities, and persons with disabilities. Protected classes may be subject to numerical goal setting in employment. The term diversity includes the protected classes, but also includes broader differences, such as age, sexual orientation, and religion. These differences are not subject to numerical goal setting in employment, but may be protected by non-discrimination statutes and policies. Please refer to Executive Order Four and the State's EEO/AA Policy for more details.

Diversity Plan Content and Design

(The following AA/Diversity Plan and Report format is required; however additional material may be submitted or referenced.)

I. Hiring and Promotion Practices

You submitted a baseline of your current hiring and promotional practices to DAS in February 2008. DAS will be contacting you to address questions and seek clarification of your submission. You will not need to submit any additional information until these meetings take place over the next several weeks.

AGENCY ACTION: If you have made any changes to your hiring practices during FY 2008 since your February submission, please submit these changes as part of your FY 2008 AA/Diversity plan results. In addition, if you plan any changes in FY 2009 those may also be submitted.

II. Recruitment and Retention Plan

AGENCY ACTION: Please fill in the text boxes in the template to describe any activities or initiatives you took in FY 2008 to address recruitment issues in your agency and your plans for FY 2009.

Recruitment and Retention Plan Intent

Recruitment and Retention of a skilled, productive, and motivated workforce is critical to establishing and maintaining a culture of excellence. Department plans will reflect specific departmental skill and workforce makeup needs to reveal opportunities for attention and improvement. These plans are intended to document your efforts in creating a culture of excellence.

Recruitment Plan

The purpose of the department's recruitment plan will be to position state government at all levels for success in finding, acquiring, retaining and promoting quality talent.

The primary components of the recruitment portion of the template include:

- Organizational Strategies
- Analysis of Factors Affecting Recruitment
- Sourcing Activities and Tools
- Other Recruitment Management Methods
- Milestones and Time Tables

Organizational Strategy

Improving diversity will help us advance our long term strategic objectives and business goals in the following manner:

Among the Commission's 10 long term objectives are the following 5 objectives that require a diverse work team:

1. Develop or enhance products and services that meet the needs of our customers.
2. Create and sustain a customer-focused culture.
3. Recruit, develop, and maximize the skills and talents of our entire team.
4. Increase key audience awareness of programs, products, and services provided by the Commission.
5. Build relationships with organizations that have similar guiding principles that are mutually beneficial to all parties.

These objectives can be met only if a diverse group of employees work together to ensure that the needs of the Commission's constituents are being met. Diversity is essential given the growing diversity of Iowa's K-12 and postsecondary student population. A diverse workforce consisting of individuals of different age, race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, religion, or disability. The life experiences and viewpoints of a diverse workforce will assist the Commission in understanding the needs of Iowa's students and their families as Iowa's population becomes more and more diverse.

It is the policy of the Iowa College Student Aid Commission to promote and ensure equal employment opportunity for all persons regardless of race, color, gender, national origin, religion, age, disability, or sexual orientation.

Equal employment opportunity principles and the need for a diverse workforce will govern all aspects of the Iowa College Student Aid Commission's personnel policies, program practices, and operations. All phases of employment, including recruitment, hiring, evaluation, promotion, transfer, assignment, training, benefits, and separation shall be conducted in compliance with equal employment opportunity laws, regulations, and in the spirit of creating a welcoming and diverse workplace.

The overall organizational strategy for recruitment in my department for FY 2008 and changes for 2009 will include the following:

FY 2008 During FY 2008, the Commission relied on the state's Brass Ring system for posting job announcements and collecting applications from eligible candidates.

FY 2009 During FY 2008, the Commission will continue to post all job announcements on the Brass Ring system and rely upon the system to collect applications from eligible candidates.

To enhance postings to the Brass Ring, the Commission will place notices in local newspapers for all management and critical staff positions. Managers and key staff members also will be aware of upcoming vacancies and will actively seek out qualified candidates and discuss vacancies with them. In addition, the Commission will appoint one management level employee to serve on the state's Statewide Ambassador Team being formed by a DAS committee to enhance the state's overall recruitment efforts.

Describe how managerial staff is assigned or otherwise allocated to the recruitment function. Please list what levels of management are involved in the recruitment function:

FY 2008 The Commission's Management Liaison had primary responsibility for recruiting employees using the state's Brass Ring system. Other management staff assisted in the effort.

FY 2009 The Management Liaison will continue to post all positions on the Brass Ring system, determine which vacancies should be advertised in local newspapers and place the ads, work with other managers to determine other means of recruiting qualified applicants such as internet postings and postings on national organizations' web sites, and serve on the Statewide Ambassador Team.

The name and contact information of a primary recruitment contact for usage by DAS is:

Julie Leeper
Iowa College Student Aid Commission
200 10th Street, 4th Floor
Des Moines, IA 50309-3609
(515) 725-3420
julie.leeper@iowa.gov

Analysis of Factors Affecting Recruitment

Based on known or projected staffing needs for FY 2009, please provide an estimate of the number of vacancies you plan to fill in FY 2009. (Note: this is for general information only and not intended to replace the affirmative action analysis and goal setting for FY 2009):

The Commission will likely fill the following 9 positions in FY 2009:

Public Service Executive 2 -- 1
Training Specialist I -- 3
Information Technology Specialist 4 -- 1
Accountant 4 -- 1
Administrative Assistant 1 -- 2
Program Planner 2 -- 1

Of the total number of positions to be filled, the following job classes have been identified as difficult to fill based on previous experience:

Accountant 4
Information Technology Specialist 4

Of the total number of positions to be filled, the following job classes have been identified as high turnover:

None.

Of the difficult to fill and high turnover job classes, list recruitment barriers experienced by job class:

Accountant 4 -- The Commission has used very few recruitment techniques and needs to expand its recruitment efforts.

Information Technology Specialist 4 -- The Commission has used very few recruitment techniques and needs to expand its recruitment efforts.

Of the difficult to fill and high turnover job classes, those which are typically underutilized for protected classes (females, minorities, or persons with disabilities) are:

None.

List the barriers that have been identified in recruitment of the protected classes:

N/A

The following methods and activities are planned to deal with recruitment barriers in FY 2009:

The Commission will work closely with the Iowa Department of Administrative Services to ensure that recruitment efforts are formalized.

The Commission has a staff member serving on the Statewide Ambassador Program planning committee. The Commission will continue to work with the Committee and volunteer to work when statewide recruiting initiatives are undertaken.

Sourcing Activities and Tools

In FY 2008 we attended the following career fairs, networking events, and community events:

None.

In FY 2009, we plan to attend the following career fairs, networking events, and community events:

The Commission will work with the Statewide Ambassador Program. The primary goal of the Statewide Ambassador Program is "to make available a ready pool of

employees who are trained and willing to represent the State of Iowa at statewide employment, community, and cultural events".

Besides the DAS BrassRing applicant tracking system, we use (or plan to use in FY 2009) the following sourcing tools:

Tool	FY 2008	Budget Est.	FY 2009	Budget Est.
Internet Job Postings	0	\$0	1	\$105
Resume Search Products	0	\$0	0	\$0
Standard News Print	0	\$0	2	\$1,500
Specialty Trade Journals	0	\$0	0	0
Radio	0	\$0	0	\$0
TV	0	\$0	0	\$0
Open House	0	\$0	0	\$0
Search Firms	0	\$0	0	\$0
Temporary Staffing	0	\$0	0	\$0

Other (please list):

Word-of-mouth among the student financial aid professionals with whom Commission employees come in contact on a daily basis.

E-mail listserves for national organizations such as the National Council of Higher Education Loan Programs, National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators, Midwest Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators, and Iowa Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators.

Identify which of these sourcing tools; either individually or in combination, are most effective in your experience:

Internet listserves and Standard News Print

Other Recruitment Management Methods

In FY 2008, we recruited passive candidates in the following manner (passive candidates are those not actively seeking employment):

The Commission's management staff works closely with student financial aid professionals and, when appropriate, makes sure those professionals are aware of job openings at the Commission. Management staff also makes sure those financial aid professionals are aware of the state's hiring process.

Does your agency use interns? If so, please describe your process for recruiting, such as posting to your website or DAS, hiring as temporary, use of Americorps, etc.:

The Commission does not use interns.

Please indicate whether you utilize temporary employment services to provide potential candidates for permanent hire, and if so the process you follow:

The Commission does not use temporary employment services to provide potential candidates for permanent hire.

Describe how you handle, track, or otherwise process unsolicited resumes. Indicate if/how you share these within your agency or with other agencies:

The Commission's Personnel Manager keeps a file of all unsolicited resumes. This file is shared with agency managers when positions are open. Individuals with resumes that meet the requirements of open positions are contacted and informed of the opening and are given information about applying for state positions.

Milestones and Timetables

Summarize your FY 2008 recruitment milestones and identify opportunities for improvement:

A staff member is working on a statewide committee to enhance statewide recruitment to ensure a diverse workforce.

Diversity training for all managers to help everyone recognize the importance of a diverse workplace.

For FY 2009, provide a timetable for those activities you plan to implement:

Solicit and recruit a diverse population to work with a federal grant. This grant will assist low-income/underserved students and their families. Staff will be on board on or before January 1, 2000.

Continue diversity training for all staff. This activity will continue throughout FY 2009.

Retention Plan

The purpose of the department's retention plan is to retain and promote diverse and qualified talent.

The primary components of the retention portion of the template include:

- Analysis of Factors Affecting Retention in three areas – FY 2008
 - Turnover
 - Promotions
 - Employee Engagement
- Plans to Improve – FY 2009
- Self assessment

Analysis of Factors Affecting Retention – FY 2008

The following sections are intended to obtain your analysis of the following factors affecting your workforce.

Turnover

From a retention perspective, the following job classes present the greatest challenge:

The Commission has a very high retention rate, no job classes have been identified as challenging in this area.

List the issues you have identified that contribute to the turnover in these classes:

N/A

Check the methods you use to identify turnover factors (check all that apply):

☒ Exit interviews

Describe how these are conducted:

The Executive Director meets with employees who are leaving the agency to obtain their feedback and recommendations.

☐ Workforce surveys (employee engagement, satisfaction)

Describe how these are conducted:

Text Box

☒ Management team meetings/exercises

Describe how these are conducted:

The Commission's strategic plan is discussed with Commissioners and the management team on an annual basis.

☐ Other methods (please describe):

Text Box

Promotions

Identify some of the most critical competencies you perceive to be most lacking in your organization. This may include any particular knowledge, ability, or skill, or personal trait:

The Commission encourages staff to pursue promotional opportunities. Employees interested in applying for higher level positions are required to apply for the positions in accordance with personnel hiring procedures. Staff with the necessary knowledge, skill, and experience are promoted whenever appropriate.

There are not specific critical competencies lacking at the Commission.

Which of these same competencies are most likely to affect a decision in your organization to open a vacancy to the general public rather than as a promotional opportunity:

An employee's skill, knowledge, and ability to learn the skills needed to fill open positions are important to the Commission. If internal candidates cannot meet the requirements of a position, the vacancy will be posted to the general public.

Identify barriers to promotional opportunities for internal employees, such as lack of education, infrequency of suitable vacancies, geographic location, etc. :

Staff not promoted into higher positions generally are those who have not had experience or training in the areas into which they are seeking promotions. Often training is essential to the success of a person in a specific position.

Management also takes into consideration a person's work ethic when viewing promotional applications -- this may include personal traits such as patterns of missed work time and general attitude toward the Commission and other employees.

Indicate if and how these barriers differ for protected class employees (females, minorities, persons with disabilities):

These barriers are consistent for all classes of employees at the Commission.

Employee Engagement

Describe any activities or methods (such as surveys or interviews) your department uses to measure the engagement of your employees with your organization:

The Commission uses full staff meetings and individual team meetings to measure engagement. During these meetings, managers provide information and obtain feedback from all employees.

Identify what topics you address:

- ☒ *Understanding of the organization's vision and mission*
- ☐ *Managerial approachability and style*
- ☒ *Job satisfaction*
- ☐ *Cultural inclusion*
- ☒ *Flow of and access to information*
- ☐ *Career progression awareness*
- ☐ *Work/life balance*
- ☐ *Other - Text Box*

Employees would rate the department's effectiveness in communicating the support, programs and promotional opportunities available to them as:

- ☒ *Good* ☐ *Needing Improvement* ☐ *Unknown*

Describe the employee communication methods used to make employees aware of the support, programs, and promotional opportunities available to them:

The Commission provides information about support, programs, and promotional opportunities through the use of the e-mail system and with postings on bulletin boards in the Commission's offices.

Describe any changes you plan to make around employee engagement in FY 2009:

The Commission will increase the number of full staff meetings to ensure that all employees are receiving important information in the areas of support, programs, and promotional opportunities. The Commission also will provide in-house diversity awareness training.

Plans to Improve – FY 2009

Check all programs you will implement in FY 2009 and describe how you see the program improving retention in your workforce for FY2009:

- ☒ *Orientation and On-boarding:*

The Commission will provide more detailed orientation -- including updated materials that will be provided to all new employees.

☒ *Training and educational opportunities to support business needs and employee competencies to enhance promotional potential:*

The Commission places high value on formal training and educational opportunities. The Commission's management team seeks to ensure that all employees receive some type of state-sponsored training each year. In addition, the Commission is a proponent of formal postsecondary education and, as budgets allow, provides monetary support to employees seeking higher education.

☐ *Workplace accessibility (visual, physical):*

Text Box

☒ *Mentoring:*

The Commission also will implement a mentoring program that will formalize team building with new employees to ensure that well-established employees provide the information and support necessary to ensure retention of newly hired employees.

☒ *Awards and Recognition:*

The Commission supports the state's Golden Dome awards and each year selects employees to be honored.

III. Diversity Training

AGENCY ACTION: Please provide information about diversity related training provided in FY 2008. This will be used to report FY 2008 training activities for the FY 2008 affirmative action plan year.

Managers and supervisors at the Commission began attending diversity training courses in FY 2008.

Provide information about diversity-related training planned for FY 2009 in the text box.

All managers and supervisory will have completed diversity training by December, 2008, and all employees will complete training prior to the end of FY 2009. In addition to attending state-sponsored classes, diversity training will be conducted in-house during staff meetings to ensure that all employees continue to make sensitivity to diversity issues a priority.

Note: Mandatory diversity training will be provided to both management and employees in FY 2009. However, include in your plan and report any other training you are planning or have done.

IV. Workforce Composition and Hiring Opportunities

AGENCY ACTION: The goal setting data to address underutilization of protected class members in underutilized job categories will be sent to you for action separately in late July as mentioned earlier in this document. This data won't be available until after the end of the fiscal year. Therefore you will not need to submit your hiring goals with this document.

We will continue to address numerical underutilization through the normal quantitative affirmative action process as you have done in the past:

- DAS will provide your agency with your department's workforce composition, average turnover, and underutilization by job class.
- Your agency will review this data and establish hiring goals for FY 2009.
- Hiring lists issued by DAS will continue to identify protected class members if the job class is underutilized. How this list is handled should be addressed in your hiring practices and procedures (Item I., above).
- DAS will calculate your year end FY 2008 protected class hiring progress.
- Your hiring progress in FY 2008 and hiring goals for FY 2009 will be incorporated into the AA/Diversity Plan Annual Report to the IGOV and Legislature, due by September 30, 2008.

You also receive periodic hiring opportunity reports that remind you of the vacancies that are currently in process for your department

As a general measure of diversity in state government, a current workforce composition report (April 17, 2008) comparing your department to the executive branch overall is provided. Please use this as needed.

V. Efforts of the Agency to Encourage and Celebrate Diversity

AGENCY ACTION: Please fill in the following text boxes for each question. This will constitute your plan for FY 2009 to encourage and celebrate diversity. Also report any FY 2008 activities.

Describe how the success of your diversity efforts advances your department's long-term strategic objectives and business goals.

It is the mission of the Iowa College Student Aid Commission to advocate for, and provide a continuum of services to support, Iowa students and families as they explore and finance educational opportunities beyond high school.

Our workforce must possess and demonstrate the necessary expertise to deliver the programs, products and services provided by the Commission. The recruitment and selection of talented and motivated employees is a primary factor in making that happen.

Describe how your managers and supervisors will be involved in diversity.

All managers and supervisors will participate in the "Diversity Training for Hiring Managers" class provided by the State. This will ensure that a diverse workforce is highly valued and sought.

Executive Order 4 establishes the goal to be inclusive of employees with differences in age, race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, religion, and disability. Describe the methods and activities you plan to initiate in FY 2009 to broaden inclusiveness for all these groups.

Following the training of managers and supervisors, the Commission will put in place a series of activities that will be used during staff meetings to ensure that the diversity is embraced by the entire staff and to further staff's understanding of what it means to be diverse. Activities will include training in areas of age, race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, religion, and disability. Staff will learn to more fully appreciate and embrace co-workers of diverse backgrounds and abilities.